

# Louisiana Commission on Civic Education

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## Commission Staff

Tammy Crain-Waldrop  
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Nanette Normand  
Administrative Secretary

## APPROVED MINUTES

May 16, 2014

### I. CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Louisiana Commission on Civic Education was held on Friday, May 16, 2014 in the John J. Hainkel Jr. Room at the State Capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The chairwoman, Beth Courtney called the meeting to order at 2:07 p.m.

### II. ROLL CALL

The secretary called the roll and the following was noted:

#### MEMBERS PRESENT

Beth Courtney (Chair)  
John Alexander  
Sen. Conrad Appel (proxy - Tamara Heidenthal)  
Nancy Beben  
Fredell Butler  
Julie Cherry (proxy - Nicholas Auck)  
Peggy Cotogno  
Barry Erwin  
Richard Hartley  
Ashley Herad  
Brenda Hodge  
Nathan James  
Polly Johnson  
Terry Landry  
Pamela Mitchell-Wagner  
Robert Travis Scott

#### MEMBERS ABSENT

Sen. Yovvne Dorsey-Colomb (Vice-Ch)  
Rep. Steve Carter  
Carolyn Hill  
Rep. Patrick Jefferson  
Judge Wendell Manning  
Lawrence Narcisse  
Sanettria "Sam" Pleasant  
Judge Karen Roby  
Lauren Russell  
Anita Sexton

#### STAFF PRESENT

Tammy Crain-Waldrop, Researcher  
Nanette Normand, Administrative Secretary

### **III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Nathan James made a motion to approve the minutes from the November 12, 2013 meeting, and there being no objection, the minutes were approved.

### **IV. BUSINESS BEFORE THE COMMITTEE**

Beth Courtney thanked Nanette Normand for taking over the Legislative Youth Advisory Council as the new coordinator. She stated that Ms. Normand has done a splendid job and wanted to thank her for taking on the new role.

Richard Hartley spoke on the 200<sup>th</sup> celebration of the Battle of New Orleans. He introduced two people who work with the character education program at the different parks and welcome centers. Former Congressman Henson Moore is working on the program for next year's bicentennial celebration of the Battle of New Orleans. There will be a beautiful bound education book similar to the one done during the state's bicentennial celebration. It will be full of educational facts and activities for students and will be sent to all public and private schools in the state for use in the classroom. (Passed around the three bound set of educational books on the Atchafalaya Basin.) The last initiative that our office is working on is in conjunction with the new Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame and Northwest History Museum in Natchitoches. The museum was opened last June. The education program for this will be based on the honorees who have been inducted into the museum. The curriculum is being based on a letter that Coach Dale Brown had written to Shaquille O'Neal after Shaq's first year in the NBA. It embraces all the character traits, concepts and strengths that a person needs to be successful. A national company has offered us a \$5,000 grant to help with the production of this program. It is thought that it will be used, at least, in the southeastern states, with the possibility of it going as a nationwide curriculum.

Beth Courtney commended Richard and his office on their great work and offered to digitize some of the work and place it online on LPB's website for teachers to use.

Beth Courtney reminded the commission that one of the most important duties of the commission is to select and approve the members of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council.

Nanette Normand explained to the commission that LYAC accepts new applications for consideration between January 15<sup>th</sup> and March 15<sup>th</sup> each year. This year, as always, we received many excellent applicants. As you know, we use an anonymous evaluation and review process in which the identity of the applicant is concealed from the reviewers. This type of review ensures that the committee members have no knowledge of the identity of the applicants or any bias upon their review of any applicant. The application is judged on its own merit based on the quality of the information submitted. The application review committee received the applications in early April and the numbers have been tallied and Ms. Brenda Hodge will read the results.

Brenda Hodge read the report from the Application Review Committee as follows:

## **Legislative Youth Advisory Council**

### **Report of the LYAC Application Review Committee**

#### **Recommendations for the 2014-2015 Membership**

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<b>MEMBER</b>	<b>ALTERNATE MEMBERS</b>
<b><u>Congressional District 1</u></b>	
Brad Petras Northshore High School	Travin Handley Pearl River High School
Rachel Stevenson Salmen High School	Lauren Breaux Pearl River High School
<b><u>Congressional District 2</u></b>	
Julian Turner Hahnville High School	Frederick Bell Iberville Math, Science & Arts Academy East
Jillian Wohlgemuth Cabrini High School	Desmond LeBlanc Warren Easton Charter High School
<b><u>Congressional District 3</u></b>	
Clarke Patrone Episcopal School of Acadiana	Tyler Welch Barbe High School
Erika Schlicher New Iberia Senior High	Nicole Roy New Iberia Senior High
<b><u>Congressional District 4</u></b>	
Gabrielle Lewis Westminister Christian Academy	John Hobgood Loyola College Prep
Samantha Hilburn Captain Shreve High School	Ashlyn Tullis Northwood High School
<b><u>Congressional District 5</u></b>	
Stoney McLarty Calvin High School	Word Lindsey LaSalle High School
Folasade Lapite Neville High School	Jacob Chandler Jena High School
<b><u>Congressional District 6</u></b>	
Franciso Navarro	Mary Strange

E.O. White Catholic High School

St. Joseph's Academy

Samhita Rao

Andrew Chenevert

Baton Rouge Magnet High School

Catholic High School

### Members from the State At-large

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**MEMBER**

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**ALTERNATE MEMBERS**

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Beverly Brown  
St. Scholastica Academy

Grace Mierl  
Mandeville High School

Morgan Me'Lyn Grant  
New Orleans Center for Creative Arts

Victoria Pfeifer  
Slidell High School

Joel Ramirez-Cedeno  
Hahnville High School

Madelyn Koske  
Benton High School

Grace Bridges  
International High School of New Orleans

Yu Chen  
Parkway High School

Elijah Evans  
Comeaux High School

Peyton Arthur  
Hornbeck High School

Wallace Myers  
Bethel Christian

Le'Trece Adolph  
Brusly High School

Aislinn Kimbrough  
Benton High School

Richard Clarke  
Walker High School

Sarah LaBorde  
Holy Savior Menard Central High School

Rachel Campbell  
Foutainebleau High School

Annslee Perego  
Bolton High School

Manuel Bailey  
McKinley Senior High School

Richard Hartley made a motion to approve the nominations for the 2014-2015 term, and there being no objection, the nominees were approved.

Alisha Chowdhury, a member and vice president of the 2013-2014 Legislative Youth Advisory Council spoke on several of the initiatives that she had the pleasure of working on. One of the initiatives she worked on was creating a Youth Municipal Council in Kenner. These councils work closely with the mayor and the city council. The mayor was very supportive of the idea and the council officially began its business in January with 21 members. The council has already worked at numerous events in the city of Kenner and this summer they are hosting a huge cabbage

ball tournament to raise money to restore all of the parks in Kenner that were never restored after Hurricane Katrina. The goal is \$5,000 and she feels that the council will exceed that goal. She also participated in the Tuition Task Force that was created through HR 206 of the 2013 Regular Session of the Legislature. She served along with four other LYAC members on the task force to discuss the problems of rising tuition costs for secondary education in Louisiana. The LYAC members seized the opportunity to voice their opinion on TOPS criteria and rising tuition costs. Participating on this task force helped each LYAC member to learn and interact with the business and state leaders on writing the recommendations for the legislature. She also updated the commission on LYAC's first Bullying Awareness Day. LYAC asked each school in the state to participate in Bullying Awareness Day during the week of April 7<sup>th</sup> thru the 11<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Chowdhury's school participated throughout the week with various activities and rallies. The parish even participated by assisting in the production of a Bullying Awareness Video that has been aired on the Jefferson Parish Public School System Channel and it was also spread out through all the other schools in the community. (Video was shown for the Commission).

Patrick Flanigan, LYAC member and President of the council commented that this program is an excellent program and it is definitely something that should be continued. This year the council did not add any legislative instruments to the list of things that were accomplished. However, the council explored the issue of bullying and put several of the ideas into action.

Elijah Evans, LYAC member, who is also CEO and founder of the non profit "No Use for Abuse Inc." spoke about the non-profit he runs to bring hope to foster children and child abuse victims throughout the state. The last two years, the major events of No Use for Abuse consisted of "Christmas of Hope" and a "Back to School Bash". The Christmas of Hope event is designed to allow foster children who are assigned to the program from DCFS a special Christmas day. We work with different non-profits throughout the area to get the children gifts they truly want. Most recently, Elijah was named one of the top 10 volunteers in the United States for the Prudential Spirit of Community Award. Out of 30,000 applicants, 102 are chosen, two from each state, one high school and one middle school. Elijah was chosen for Louisiana. He was then given the honor of being in the top 10. He received a gold medal, a \$5,000 scholarship and a \$5,000 grant for the organization of his choice. He was also named the LPB Young Hero in 2012.

Beth Courtney commended all the LYAC members for their participation on the Tuition Task Force and although it appears that the legislation that came from the recommendations will not pass this session it is a start. She also commended all the LYAC members who participated in LPB's Public Square.

Kevin Gautreaux with LPB and producer of the program Public Square explained that Public Square is a monthly news and public affairs program that LPB produces. It takes advantage of our unique statewide platform. The format is a moderated citizen roundtable discussion followed by a question and answer segment with a panel of experts. The program is in its tenth year of production. In 2009, the Legislative Youth Advisory Council began participating in the show with the participation of at least 2 members each month.

Bob Neese with LPB updated the commission on the Gettysburg address. 2013 was the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Gettysburg address. Ken Burns decided to create a documentary that would pay homage to one of the greatest speeches in United States history. He chose a small school in

Vermont, called the Greenwood School, where they specialized in teaching students with special needs. Every year the school gets the students together and they learn the Gettysburg address and recite it at the end of the year. In addition, Ken Burns encouraged the public to recite or read the Gettysburg address and upload it to you tube. Several past presidents as well as public officials, and celebrities participated. In Louisiana, we received 80 videos, including one in french, with a total of 150 people involved.

Morgan Blanchard with Legislators Back to School Program for the Senate updated the commission on the program. Late 2013 she took over the Back to School Program so it got a little bit of a late start but we have some good quality programming going on. The teachers love it, the senators who have the time to go love it. They come back with great stories. This year there were 16 Senators who participated. They went to 24 different schools across the state and reached over 600 students. There were 62 representatives who participated in the program on the house side. Lauren Russell actually coordinates that effort but she wasn't able to be here today.

Beth Courtney updated the committee on the SB43 by Senator Broome which makes changes to the statute dealing with LYAC.

## **V. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the committee, Barry Erwin moved to adjourn. Without objection, the meeting was adjourned at 3:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Beth Courtney, Chairwoman

Approved: 11/14/14